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FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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DATE 3/20/81

FROM : AMEMBASSY, MOSCOW

TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON

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SUBJECT:

PRAVDA ATTACK UPON FINNISH GOVERNMENT

There are enclosed copies of a translation of an article entitled "'Brothers in Arms' Surge to Power", which appeared in Pravda on November 26, 1952. The article occupied the most prominent position in Pravda, the top left space on the front page.

The article, sharply critical of recent Finnish political developments, is in marked contrast to the generally friendly tone which the Soviet press has exhibited towards Finland in the last several months. It first refers to the recent improvement in Finnish-Soviet relations, exemplified by the expansion of economic relations and the increase in cultural exchanges between the two countries. The assertion is then made that the strengthening of peaceful relations between the two states is undesirable to those elements in the Finnish population "who do not hide their pro-American orientation" and are "striving to subjugate the foreign policy of Finland to the aggressive plans of the USA". It is made plain in the article that the motivation for the attack was the planned reorganization of the Finnish Government to include LESKINEN, Secretary of the Social Democratic Party, in the Cabinet as Minister of Social Affairs. According to the article, Leskinen was secretary of the "Brothers in Arms" group during the Finnish-Soviet war, was closely associated with the reactionary TANNER, and "has never concealed his hostility to the USSR". The article closes with this ominous question:

"Is it not clear that the policy of these circles which seek the inclusion in the government of people like Leskinen is damaging the national interests of Finland itself and cannot fail to have a negative effect on Soviet-Finnish relations?"

JJ Jones/ph/lg

REPORTER

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It is possible that the Pravda attack upon Leskinen presages an increasing pressure upon Finland to follow policies more completely in consonance with Soviet aims. We are inclined to believe however, that the Pravda attack by itself does not necessarily signify the initiation of such a campaign by the Soviet Government, and that it will be necessary to see what, if any, further action the Soviet Government takes along these lines before an evaluation of the full significance of the article is possible. At this time we believe that the article constitutes merely a warning to the Finns that the Soviet Union will oppose the inclusion in the Government of elements which it considers hostile to itself, as well as any tendency towards a more pro-Western orientation in the present Finnish policy of "tight-rope walking" between the East and West.

Elim O'Shaughnessy
Elim O'Shaughnessy
Charge d'Affaires, a.i.

Enclosure: *att*

✓ Translation Article "Brothers
in Arms' Surge to Power".

Copies to:

AmLegation, Helsinki
AmEmbassy, Stockholm

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PRAVDA

November 26, 1952

"BROTHERS IN ARMS" SURGE TO POWER
(Editorial)

The attention of the thoughtful observer cannot but be drawn to the growing tenseness of the political atmosphere in Finland. For some time now governmental crises have been breaking out there often. It is evident that the reasons for the crises of the government are supposedly some minor issue: differences in views on the problem of the regulation of prices on agricultural products are aired in the ruling circles at one time, then the differences of opinions concerning the condition of the highways in the country are demonstrated at another time, etc.

There is no doubt however that the true reasons for the recurring governmental crises lie much deeper. Arguments concerning prices on products or the condition of roads only conceal these true reasons. What then is the crux of the matter? In order to answer this question, it is necessary to keep in mind that Soviet-Finnish relations of late have been developing in the direction of their improvement: economic relations between both countries have expanded, cultural exchange has increased; a supplementary economic agreement expanding the volume of trade between the USSR and Finland was concluded recently. But this healthy tendency which fosters the strengthening of good neighbourly peaceful relations is undesirable precisely to those elements who are striving for a reorganization of the government and who do not hide their pro-American orientation, striving to subjugate the foreign policy of Finland to the aggressive plans of the USA.

The leaders of the right-wing Social Democrats, in the first place, are among those elements who bear a heavy responsibility for Finland's participation on Hitler's side in the world war. It is evident that the former members of the fascist league, "Brothers in Arms", which was disbanded after the war, and who are grouped at the present time around Vaino Leskinen, Secretary of the Social Democratic Party, are playing an especially active role in the present intrigues of the leaders of the right-wing Social Democrats. This Leskinen was Secretary of the fascist league "Brothers in Arms" during the war against the USSR. He commanded a company which he himself expressively called "a company of gangsters".

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It is a secret to no one in Helsinki that the most arrant Finnish reaction stands behind the "Brothers in Arms" clique and that their bellicose ardour is heated up by American imperialist circles. It is precisely to these circles that the clues, at first glance incomprehensible, to the frequent governmental crises lead.

Apparently they realise in Washington that if they speak out rashly in Finland then not much will be achieved. Times have changed and if the "company of gangsters" - this Mister Leskinen and his colleagues, who are in the service of the State Department, would openly advocate a return to the former policy of hostility towards the Soviet Union, they would meet with a serious repulse on the part of the Finnish public because confidence in the peaceful good neighbour policy of the USSR is permeating more and more deeply into the conscience of the Finnish people.

In such conditions the American network of agents in Finland is compelled to manoeuvre and disguise itself. It is not fortuitous, for example, that the out-and-out traitor to the Finnish people, Leskinen's spiritual father, Tanner, who was released comparatively recently from the prison in which he was confined as a chief war criminal, prefers for the time being to keep at a certain distance from the direct struggle for power, and people who are a little younger, a little more resourceful, are acting on the proscenium.

At the present time these bosses of the Social Democratic Party, who were recently active participants in the fascist organisation, pursue the aim of at least obtaining the majority in the composition of the present government. It should be remarked moreover that these gentlemen are displaying quite a lot of resourcefulness in their striving to achieve this aim. In the autumn of this year, for example, they put forward a project for the setting up of a new ministry - a Ministry of Supply - calculating that they could arrogate this post to themselves and that in this way they would strengthen their positions in the government. However, this trick was thwarted: the scheme to set up a new ministry did not meet with support in the Sejm.

Then Tanner and other reactionaries, with the aid of intrigues, brought about the resignation of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Tuomioja. The post of Minister

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of Foreign Affairs - this was just what the supporters of the pro-American orientation wanted most of all. The Social Democratic faction of the same immediately provoked a routine government crises with a view to obtaining this post and securing a majority in the government.

However, on this occasion the frontal attack did not lead to full success. It has now been learned that during the negotiations for the elimination of the government crises a plan was worked out for the reorganisation of the government, in accordance with which the Prime Minister will, holding double office, be in charge of foreign affairs together with Minister Tornngren, and the Social Democrats will receive additionally the post of Minister of Social Affairs. Of course, the Ministry of Social Affairs is not the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It should be taken into account, however, that according to this plan the group of right-wing Social Democrats will obtain numerical predominance in the government over the ministers who are members of the Agrarian Union. In this way, implementation of this plan would mean a strengthening of the positions of the American network of agents in the government and of its influence on Finland's policy. And this is precisely the aim of Finnish reaction, which is striving for deterioration of Finnish-Soviet relations and, contrary to the national interests of Finland, is disregarding the favourable prospects which have manifested themselves in these relations of late.

That this is precisely how matters stand is borne out convincingly by the nomination by the Social Democratic Party of the candidature of Mr. Leskinen for the post of Minister of Social Affairs.

It is well known that after the war Leskinen not only did not condemn the criminal activity of the fascist "Brothers in Arms" organisation, of which he was the Secretary-General, but, on the contrary, extolled it. After securing without difficulty an executive post in the Social Democratic Party, he became the war criminal Tanner's right hand. Everyone in Helsinki remembers that when Tanner was still in prison Leskinen almost every Sunday went to see him to receive guiding instructions. At the present time Leskinen is the Secretary-General of the Social Democratic Party and the chairman of its faction in the Sejm.

Mr. Leskinen has never concealed his hostility to the USSR. At the same time he has called for the incorporation of Finland in the "Marshall Plan". He also

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opposed the adoption of the law punishing the war criminals who were the organisers of the secret munitions dumps, and voted for their rehabilitation.

Leskinen is an invariable participant in all the international conclaves of Social-traitors who are agents of American imperialism and carry out its dirtiest assignments in the preparation of war. As recently as September 12 he made a routine statement in which he tried to justify the criminal war of Hitler's Finnish accomplices against the Soviet Union.

Such is Mr. Leskinen who, as is commonly known in Finland, likes to boast among his fellow-thinkers that he chose as his slogan the battle-cry "Forward, My Gangsters!"

Making a reply in July 1945 to an interpellation by a group of deputies of the Sejm, the present President of Finland, Mr. Paasikivi, stated:

"The strengthening of mutual relations with other countries, and primarily with the Soviet Union, will not be possible while responsible posts in the public life of the country are held by people who in the war years collaborated with the Germans both in regard to the foreign and in regard to the domestic policy of the country. Such people do not enjoy any confidence either inside the country or abroad."

Is it not clear that these reasonable words strike directly at such "personages" as Leskinen who once served the Hitlerites and have now flitted over to the service of the American warmongers?

Is it not clear that the policy of these circles which seek the inclusion in the government of people like Leskinen is damaging the national interests of Finland itself and cannot fail to have a negative effect on Soviet-Finnish relations?

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